

Index to
Memorandum Minutes of the Commission of Fine Arts Meeting
14 October 1959

	Page
I. <u>Administration</u>	
1. Group photograph of members	1
2. Date of next meeting	1
II. <u>Submissions</u>	
1. <u>Department of Commerce</u>	
a. <u>Bureau of Public Roads</u>	
(1) Sculptural Decorations for the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge	1
2. <u>District Engineer, Corps of Engineers</u>	
a. Cartographic Engineering Building, Army Map Service	2
3. <u>National Cultural Center Board</u>	
a. Preliminary Design of National Cultural Center	2- 3
4. <u>General Services Administration, Public Bldg. Serv.</u>	
a. State Department South Entrance Sculpture	4
b. Proposed Design for Federal Triangle Refrigeration plant	4
c. Building for Department of Labor	5
d. Square 167, FOB 7; Court of Claims	5
5. <u>District of Columbia Department of Buildings and Grds.</u>	
a. Elementary School, 49th and Lee Sts. NE	5
b. Elementary School, 12th and E. St. SE	5
6. <u>Approach Roads to Theodore Roosevelt Bridge and the Traffic lanes in the Lincoln Memorial Area</u>	6
7. <u>District of Columbia Department of Highways & Traffic</u>	
a. Lighting Standard for Theodore Roosevelt Bridge	6
8. <u>Department of the Interior</u>	
a. <u>National Capital Parks, National Park Service</u>	
(1) Development of Landscape Treatment of Memorial Avenue to accommodate monuments	7

Memorandum Minutes of the
Proceedings of the Commission of Fine Arts, 14 October 1959
Washington, D.C.

The Commission met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m., with David E. Finley, Chairman, presiding. The following were present:

David E. Finley, Chairman
Douglas W. Orr, Vice Chairman
Felix W. de Weldon
Peter Hurd
William G. Perry
Ralph Walker

I. Administration

1. Group photograph of Members

When the Commission convened at 9:30 a.m., a photographer was present to take a photograph of the members of the Commission of Fine Arts at the conference table in the conference room. This meeting marked the first opportunity to take such a picture when all the members were in attendance who had been appointed or reappointed in April 1959. The records of the Commission contain group photographs of most of the various memberships and in taking this action a tradition of keeping this photographic record was upheld.

2. Date of next meeting

Executive Session - 17 November 1959

Regular meeting - 18 November 1959

II. Submissions

1. Department of Commerce

a. Bureau of Public Roads

(1) Sculptural Decorations for the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge

The sculptor, Mr. C. Paul Jennewein, was present to explain his concept for this work. He showed the Commission a quarter-scale model of a round plaque, which will be mounted on stone and surrounded by fine classical lettering. In the round plaque was a profile view of Woodrow Wilson. The sculptor then said that he hoped to have the designs cast in aluminum because he felt that it was more in keeping with the material of the bridge and because he wanted to give his work a look that would be of equal contemporary character with the bridge. There was a divided opinion among the members of the Commission as to whether the memorial plaque might not better be cast in bronze or carved directly in stone. Following discussion of the various merits of each of these materials the Commission voted and by a majority of one the aluminum scheme proposed by the sculptor was adopted. The members of the Commission thought that the composition and lettering of the memorial was well handled and commended Mr. Jennewein for his work. The Secretary was instructed to prepare a letter for the Chairman's signature which

would express the approval of the Commission for the design as the sculptor presented it. A copy of this letter is being made a part of this record. EXHIBIT A.

2. District Engineer, Corps of Engineers

b. Domiciliary Building at the Soldiers Home

Mr. Wooster stated that he and Mr. Richey had not come prepared to discuss the design of central wings of the Domiciliary Building but, in the absence of a representative from the Soldiers Home, they would be glad to answer any questions they could. The members of the Commission had discussed the design with the architect and Colonel Romaine of the Soldiers Home at a previous meeting when they had expressed a desire to see the entire design of the west facade including the two additional wings which would be added in the future. A perspective drawing showing the entire west facade was accordingly forwarded to the Commission by mail. The drawing showed the additional structures at the ends. The members found the design monotonous, but after a discussion, it was moved and carried to approve the design as submitted. The Secretary was requested to draft a letter for the Chairman's signature to the District Engineer informing him of this action, a copy of such letter being made a part of the official record of the proceedings. EXHIBIT I.

2. District Engineer, Corps of Engineers

a. Cartographic Engineering Building, Army Map Service

The architect, Mr. R. L. Richey, of the firm R.L. Richey, Lawrie and Green, explained his drawings for a brick building of much the same type as the existing Army Map Service building and adjoining it to the north. Somewhat smaller than the existing building, it will be built of matching red brick with limestone parapet, and will be connected to it by a three story glass and metal gallery. After some questions about the design, type of material and the relation to the site which overlooks the Potomac, the members of the Commission were of the opinion that Mr. Richey had solved his problem in a satisfactory manner and it was voted to approve the drawings as presented. The Secretary was instructed to draft a letter for the Chairman's signature which would express these views to the District Engineer. This letter will be made a part of the official record.

EXHIBIT B.

3. National Cultural Center Board

a. Preliminary Design of National Cultural Center

District Commissioners McLaughlin and Karrick sat with the Commission while Mr. Edward Stone and his assistants explained his conception of the National Cultural Center in a series of drawings he had prepared to show to various government agencies, which will be involved in the design of the Center. Representatives of the District Engineer Commissioner, the National Capital Planning Commission, and the Interior Department were also present. Outside of showings to the Executive Committee of the National Cultural Center Board, this was the first opportunity for governmental officials to see what form the architect's conception of this important building would take.

Mr. Stone proceeded to develop his ideas through exhibition of his drawings and by outlining how he had combined the individual parts, considered necessary for the Cultural Center -- such as the opera house, the symphony hall, the theatre and the small hall into a unified design. The requirements for these various facilities had been worked out in conferences with the Executive Committee of the Cultural Board and other government officials, who are authorized to prepare specifications for the establishment. Because of the rather restricted location of the Cultural Center immediately to the west of the proposed inner loop, Mr. Stone had explored, on the recommendation of the Director of the National Park Service, the possibility of extending the Cultural Center west to the river bank, thus giving the building a very important facade directly on the river. To do this, it will be necessary to divert the existing Rock Creek Parkway to the east around the building adjacent to the inner loop.

Mr. Stone drew the various parts of the composition by grouping them around a large central hall to which each of the separate facilities opened. The main points of ingress and egress to the Center occurred at the end of New Hampshire Avenue, and adjacent to the inner loop and the new location of Potomac parkway. The central hall in the composition was the focal point of the composition and was shown as a very large circular space, where very large gatherings, such as inaugural balls, etc., could be held. Thus, in addition to serving as the entrance to the various audi auditoria of the Cultural Center, it led to a large restaurant overlooking the river, and formed an impressive structure for ceremonial purposes.

The drawings that Mr. Stone had prepared were very fine delineations of the parts of the Center, and gave a fine idea of the splendid appearance the building would make. He stressed the point that the designs themselves were subject to change because they were in a preliminary stage and that further study would probably require some change in their size and character.

The Chairman of the Commission, as a member of the Executive Committee of the National Cultural Center Board, had seen Mr. Stone's drawings before. He related to the members the enthusiasm with which the Cultural Center Board had received Mr. Stone's design and he expressed his hope that the members of the Commission would be equally pleased. The members of the Commission quickly indicated that they shared the Chairman's enthusiasm and they gave Mr. Stone an expression of confidence and commendation for his fine presentation.

The enthusiasm with which the Commission received the plans for the Cultural Center were somewhat dampened by the overwhelming complexity of the roadway system that crowded it to the east and to the south where the approach to the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge will encroach very near the southern end of the property. Mr. Stone stated that the National Cultural Center Board hoped that additional land could be had to the north to square out the northeast corner of the plot beyond New Hampshire Avenue. The imminent encroachment of roadways and traffic lanes added to the regret of the Commission that the super highway system and bridge over the Potomac were authorized for this particular area. In a resolution the members of the Commission heartily endorsed the design for the National Cultural Center, and expressed their alarm over the complexity of the traffic lanes in the vicinity. A copy of this resolution was released to the press giving the Commission's views on this important project. Other copies were sent to agencies which have an interest in knowing the position of the Commission of Fine Arts, and a copy was ordered to be made a part of the official record of the proceedings. EXHIBIT C.

4. General Services Administration, Public Buildings Service

a. State Department South Entrance, Sculpture

Mr. Snyder of the Public Buildings Service reported to the Commission that failure to get supplemental appropriations from the Congress, including the cost of sculpture and landscaping for the south entrance and great court, had somewhat retarded the plans for the completion of the building and had made it necessary to eliminate the sculptural work, flanking the entrance, and in the court to the north of the entrance lobby. Contracts were accordingly being terminated with both the sculptors at this time.

The members of the Commission regretted this necessity and felt that they were again faced with the problem of sculpture being eliminated from buildings whenever funds grew scarce. They took the occasion to point out that had the legislation (S. 454) been passed which was sponsored by the Commission of Fine Arts to establish a fund for this purpose, there would have been funds available to carry out this project. The Secretary was directed to prepare a letter for the Chairman's signature setting forth the Commission's views on this subject, copy of the letter being made a part of this record. EXHIBIT D.

b. Proposed Design for the Federal Triangle Refrigeration Plant.

Mr. Snyder, and the architect, Mr. Frank Cole, presented drawings which had been developed for the proposed refrigeration plant for the Federal Triangle. They showed how the plant had been located at a point in the northeast corner of the Great Plaza, where, as a temporary structure, it would be the least harmful to the appearance of the buildings and the Plaza. The designs for the building structure were still considered to be in a preliminary stage but it was noted that they incorporated suggestions that the Commission had made at previous meetings when this problem was studied. A large part of the refrigeration plant will be underground and the exposed part will be of a temporary nature. It will stand entirely within an area where it will not affect the development of the Plaza and where it can be removed when the buildings of the Federal Triangle proposed for this location north of the Plaza are finally erected. The members of the Commission were of the opinion that the plans had now progressed to the point where the designs were feasible enough to be carried out. They believed, however, that there will be many questions arising in the course of the development which will need to be reviewed and they were especially desirous to see a perspective drawing which would show how the facades of the structure will appear. A letter was written on this subject, a copy being made a part of the official record. EXHIBIT E.

c. Building for Department of Labor, Sixth & Pennsylvania Avenue

Mr. Snyder and Mr. Riggs presented drawings, including colored renderings, for the projected building at this address, showing it as an extension of a building that was once built for the District Public Library and only partly completed. The Library has decided that it will never locate in this area and, in the meantime, all the other buildings to its northwest have been razed and converted to a parking lot. The Commission immediately noticed, on looking at the drawings, that the silhouette produced by the roof structures would not be pleasing. The current interest of District officials in this matter of unsightly roof structures was noted and the members of the Commission stated that they would not further consider this building until some effort had been made to restudy the design to bring the roof structures into better relation. Mr. Snyder said they would restudy the problem and return it at a later date.

d. Square 167 - F.O.B. #7 - Court of Claims

Mr. Snyder reported that he was under the impression until shortly before the meeting that there would be plans and models ready to show the proposals of the architects for the designs of the buildings in Square 167. At the last minute, however, it was decided that they were not completely satisfactory and there would be no exhibition of these plans until such time as all the interested parties were completely satisfied.

It was reported that the National Grange Building, which is being relocated at the north side of Square 167 was now complete to the top story and the effect of the height of this building on the other structures planned for the square could now be seen. The east and south elevations had been faced in limestone, for which the cost was appropriated by the Congress in supplemental funds to the General Services Administration. The members of the Commission were glad to know that limestone had been used but they still thought the height of this building regrettable and thought it would be a very difficult thing to bring the other buildings into harmony with it or to reduce the difference in character which had been introduced into the square by this building over whose design they had no control.

5. District of Columbia Department of Buildings and Grounds

Mr. G. A. Purcell, Architect and liaison officer of the Department of Buildings and Grounds, presented and explained preliminary designs for two proposed elementary schools at 49th and Lee Streets, Northeast, and 12th and E Streets, Southeast. The members of the Commission were glad to see the drawings while they were still in a preliminary stage and they thanked Mr. Purcell for bringing them to the Commission early enough to permit changes in the design. There was considerable discussion

on the problems involved in building and designing schools, special stress being put on the tendency to follow a formula for the design and thus make each new building look very much like the other. The idea was emphasized that schools were formed of classrooms and that recognition of the classroom elements might give some more individuality to the designs and produce a better appearance in these buildings. Mr. Purcell said that he would discuss these matters with the architects and with the formulators of policy regarding the design of schools. The Commission hoped that when restudies have been made further presentation would be made on this matter. A letter was written and is being made a part of the official record of the proceedings.

EXHIBIT F.

6. District of Columbia Department of Highways and Traffic

Mr. G. I. Sawyer and members of his staff met with the members of the Commission to discuss a design which had been prepared in his office for the lighting standards of the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge. At previous meetings the Commission urged the Department of Highways and Traffic to get a suitable design for the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge which would make its appearance be somewhat different from the design of ordinary lighting standards that are common in most areas of the country. The Commission was not impressed with the design which Mr. Sawyer presented. Action was withheld on this part of the bridge until the design of the approach roads has been considered. Mr. Sawyer said he would report the Commission's desire to see the approach roads to General Welling, the Engineer Commissioner.

7. Approach Roads to Theodore Roosevelt Bridge and the Traffic lanes in the Lincoln Memorial Area

The members of the Commission considered the approach roads to the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge most important factor in the appearance of the city and greatly deplored the refusal of the District of Columbia Highway Department to present any drawings to them for study. They also had misgivings about the effect which the inner loop and its various connections will have on the bridge and the Lincoln Memorial. The use of almost the entire parkway to accommodate interchanges of an interstate system of highways seemed to them to be a matter of grave importance. A copy of an approved drawing, dated November 1957, showing the approach roads and traffic lanes in this area was procured from the National Capital Planning Commission, so that the members of the Commission could see for themselves just what the intent of the Highway Department was in regard to traffic lanes in this area. The drawings were disturbing in their disregard for proper use of park areas and for the way in which they crowded the Lincoln Memorial and the proposed Cultural Center site.

The Chairman recalled that during many previous meetings the subject had been brought up informally to representatives of the Highway Department by his making inquiries as to when the Commission would be given an opportunity to look at these plans. As late as October 1, a letter had been addressed to the Engineer Commissioner expressing the Commission's views and requesting that some presentation of these roadways be made. No answer had been received to that letter.

11 The Chairman stated that it was his understanding that approaches to the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge involved a network of roadways with double and triple overpasses in the park areas northwest of the Lincoln Memorial and also north of Constitution Avenue in the immediate vicinity of the proposed National Cultural Center; that these roadways are included in the District of Columbia Highway Department's concept of the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge project and will be built in large part with Federal funds.

The Chairman also recalled that when Congress first authorized erection of the bridge at the Constitution Avenue site, the Commission of Fine Arts, realizing the unfortunate effect it would have on the Lincoln Memorial and the Memorial Bridge, helped to secure the permission of the Trustees of the Theodore Roosevelt Association for the bridge to cross the river farther north over the lower end of Theodore Roosevelt Island. Also, members of the Commission went to Philadelphia and worked with the architects and engineers of the bridge to secure an acceptable design for the bridge structure. That design the Commission approved and expects the bridge to be erected without delay. The approval given to this design, however, did not cover the network of roadways which the District Highway Department has made a part of the bridge concept.

Although invited to bring these plans to the Commission, the District of Columbia Highway Department has not done so, notwithstanding the fact that under the legislation establishing the Commission of Fine Arts and the Executive Order of July 28, 1921, responsibility is imposed on Federal and District officials to consult with the Commission of Fine Arts and to ask their advice as to plans for parks and buildings in such areas.

In order that the Commission of Fine Arts should not later be charged with the responsibility for roadways which have not been submitted to the Commission, Mr. Rapuano offered a motion to withdraw approval of the design of the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge until such plans for roadways and overpasses are brought to the Commission for their advice. The motion was carried unanimously

and a release has been issued. EXHIBIT G.

8. Department of the Interior

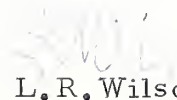
a. National Capital Parks, National Park Service

(1) Development of Landscape Treatment of Memorial Avenue to accommodate monuments

The members of the Commission considered the design for the proposed treatment of the hedges and planting as a background for the placement of sculptural monuments along both sides of Memorial Avenue leading from the circle at the Virginia end of the Memorial Bridge. The design treatment and arrangement in general gave the impression that was agreed upon when plans for this area were worked out in the years between 1926 and 1929. It was approved as presented with the exception that the depth of the rectangular recesses in the hedges for the monuments be ten feet instead of the eighteen feet proposed in the plan. The Secretary was requested to draft a letter for the Chairman's signature to the Superintendent of National Capital Parks informing him of this action, a copy of such letter being made a part of the official record of the proceedings. EXHIBIT H.

Meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


L.R. Wilson

MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

14 October 1959

9:15 A. M.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

- 9:15 a.m. 1. CONVEENE, ROOM 7000, INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING
- 9:30 a.m. 2. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS:
(Mr. F.W.Cron, Regional Engineer, Region 15, BPR;
Mr. O. Wirth, Director, National Park Service;
Mr. C.P. Jennewein, Sculptor)
- Presentation of sketch models for plaques for
Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge by Mr. Jennewein.
- 10:00 a.m. 3. DISTRICT ENGINEER, CORPS OF ENGINEERS, U.S.ARMY:
- a. Cartographic Engineering Building - Army Map
Service (Mr. R.L. Richey, Lawrie & Green, Architects)
- b. Domiciliary Building for Soldiers Home
- 11:00 a.m. 4. NATIONAL CULTURAL CENTER: (Comr. R.E. McLaughlin;
Comr. D.B. Karrick; Mr. Edward Stone, architect;
Mr. Jarold A. Kieffer, Asst. to the Secretary of
Health, Education and Welfare; Mr. R. Becker, Atty.)
- No Brunkley
for O. Welling*
- Presentation of Preliminary Plans
- 12:30 p.m. 5. LUNCH
- 1:45 p.m. 6. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION, PUBLIC BUILDINGS
SERVICE:
- a. State Department South Entrance and Sculpture
by Albert Stewart
- b. Proposed Design for the Federal Triangle
Refrigeration Plant
- c. Building for Dept. of Labor, 6th & Pa. Ave., N.W.

6. GSA, PBS (Continued)

d. Federal Office Building No. 7 (Court of Claims)

3:00 p.m.

7. D.C. DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS & GROUNDS: (Mr. G.A. Purcell, Liaison Officer)

a. New Elementary School, 49th & Lee Sts., N.E.

b. New Elementary School, 12th & E Sts., S.E.

3:30 p.m.

8. D.C. DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC: (Mr. G.I. Sawyer, Dep. Dir. for Engineering Design & Research; Mr. F.E. Twist, Traffic Engineering Operations; Mr. J. Grady, Architect)

Lamposts for Theodore Roosevelt Bridge

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

22 October 1959

Dear Mr. Erickson:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on October 14, was glad to meet with Mr. C. Paul Jennewein and to discuss with him the model which he presented showing the design of the plaque and lettering honoring Woodrow Wilson that will be placed on the piers of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge at Jones Foint, Alexandria, Virginia. The members of the Commission considered that Mr. Jennewein had achieved a fitting solution of the problem and that the lettering and the modeling of the plaque showing the head of Woodrow Wilson would make a handsome feature of the bridge piers.

The Commission will be glad to see further developments, in photographs or models, and to discuss the development of the design as it progresses. No photographs for our records were left with us at this time, but Mr. Jennewein stated that he would supply them for our files.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Mr. E. L. Erickson
Chief, Bridge Division
Office of Engineering
Bureau of Public Roads
U. S. Department of Commerce
Washington 25, D. C.

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

22 October 1959

Dear Colonel Sumner:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on October 14, was glad to discuss with representatives of your office and the architect the drawings for a new Cartographic Engineering Building for the Army Map Service. The members of the Commission considered that the architect had solved the problem in a very satisfactory manner and approved the drawings as presented.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Colonel George B. Sumner
District Engineer
U. S. Corps of Engineers
First & Douglas Streets, N. W.
Washington 25, D. C.

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

1917

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

The Commission of Fine Arts was organized by Executive Order of the President of the United States, August 1, 1907. It was composed of five members, the President, the Secretary of the Interior, and three other persons appointed by the President. The Commission was organized to advise the President and the Secretary of the Interior on all matters relating to the fine arts in connection with the construction of public buildings. The Commission has since that time been engaged in a study of the fine arts in connection with the construction of public buildings, and has issued several reports on the subject.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION FOR THE YEAR 1917

(Continued from page 1)

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION FOR THE YEAR 1917

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION FOR THE YEAR 1917

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

NEWS RELEASE

COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
7000 Interior Department Building
Washington 25, D. C.

WASHINGTON: 14 October 1959 - Statement of David E. Finley,
Chairman, Commission of Fine Arts.

The Commission of Fine Arts enthusiastically approved the general design of the National Cultural Center, as submitted today by Mr. Edward Stone, the Architect. It is a magnificent concept and will provide a cultural center of great beauty and dignity which will fulfill a long-felt need in the Nation's Capital. Such a center requires space commensurate with the architectural concept. The Commission, therefore, strongly urges that additional space be made available to the north and east of the present site of the Cultural Center and in this way provide protection and a fitting landscape setting for the building. Some consideration should also be given to a possible pedestrian access from the Mall -- a consideration which requires a drastic restudy of the proposed highway complex between the Lincoln Memorial and the Cultural Center.

NEWS RELEASE

COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
7000 Interior Department Building
Washington 25, D. C.

WASHINGTON: 14 October, 1958 - Statement of David E. Finley

Chairman, Commission of Fine Arts.

The Commission of Fine Arts unanimously approved the general design of the National Cultural Center, as submitted today by Mr. Edward Stone, the Architect. It is a magnificent concept and will provide a cultural center of great beauty and dignity which will fulfill a long-felt need in the Nation's Capital. Such a center requires space commensurate with the architectural concept. The Commission, therefore, strongly urges that additional space be made available to the north and east of the present site of the Cultural Center and in this way provide protection and a fitting landscape setting for the building. Some consideration should also be given to a possible pedestrian access from the Mall -- a consideration which requires a realistic study of the proposed highway complex between the Mall and the Cultural Center.

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

22 October 1959

Dear Mr. Wallace:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on October 14, was sorry to hear from your representatives that there would be no funds to cover completion of the plans to have sculpture in the court and at the south entrance of the new State Department Building. Sculpture in these places has been a most desirable feature of the design from the time the first sketches were shown. We hope that some means can be found in the future to revive these projects so that the building can be completed as it was originally intended.

I would like also to point out that if the funds which we proposed in Senate Bill S. 454, had been authorized and were now in existence the elimination of this sculpture would not now be necessary because of cuts in funds. We strongly urge that you join us in urging the next session of Congress in January to seriously consider and pass this bill.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Honorable Karl E. Wallace
Commissioner, Public Buildings Service
General Services Administration
Washington 25, D. C.

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING

WASHINGTON 25. D. C.

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

22 October 1959

Dear Mr. Wallace:

At its meeting on October 14, the members of the Commission of Fine Arts met with representatives of your office and the architect to discuss the design of a proposed cooling tower and refrigeration plant for the buildings of the Federal Triangle. At previous meetings it had been decided to place this structure in the northeast corner of the Great Plaza immediately south of the eastern end of the Coast Guard Building so that it would be in line with the range of buildings which will eventually replace the Coast Guard Building and the present District Building.

The members of the Commission considered that a workable solution of this problem had been achieved and they approved the manner in which the problem had been presented. They hope, however, that some sort of perspective drawing may be prepared that will clearly show how the exterior features of this cooling tower will look in perspective and in relation to the buildings that adjoin it on two sides. The next meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts will be on November 18 and we hope that you will have studies sufficiently completed to show us at that time.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Honorable Karl E. Wallace
Commissioner, Public Buildings Service
General Services Administration
Washington 25, D. C.

Copies furnished: Mr. J. Rowland Snyder
Dir. Architectural and Structural Divs. PBS
Mr. Leonard L. Hunter
Asst. Commr. for Design and Construction PBS

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

22 October 1959

Dear Mr. Crutchfield:

At its meeting on October 14, the Commission of Fine Arts was very glad to discuss with Mr. Furcell the preliminary designs for new elementary schools at 49th and Lee Streets, N.E., and 12th and E Streets, S.E. The members of the Commission were especially pleased that they were able to see the designs at an early stage, and to have an opportunity to discuss with Mr. Furcell some of the underlying principles that are current in school design and some of the drawbacks which this present method has as far as the appearance of the city of Washington is concerned. In this connection, they were sorry to see the emphasis that was put on the ribbon windows and factory-like walls, chimneys, etc. that appeared in these preliminary schemes. In using these design features it appears that the element of scale inherent in recognition of small classroom units has completely disappeared from the designs. It should be borne in mind that a school building is composed of the comparatively small spaces in which teaching takes place. The design of these two buildings is nearer the design of factories.

We hope that your office will be able to confer with the architects and to ask them to restudy the design in order to give the buildings more individual character with less emphasis on the machine-like features that were shown to us.

The next meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts will be on November 18 and we hope that it may be possible for you to have new studies to present at that time.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Mr. Richard C. Crutchfield
Chief, Office of Design and Engineering
Department of Buildings and Grounds
Government of the District of Columbia
Washington 1, D. C.

NEWS RELEASE

COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
7000 Interior Department Building
Washington 25, D. C.

WASHINGTON: 14 October 1959- Statement of David E. Finley,
Chairman, Commission of Fine Arts.

The Commission of Fine Arts today, by unanimous resolution, withdrew the approval given in January 1959 of the design of the proposed Theodore Roosevelt Bridge at Constitution Avenue. Approval at that time was conditioned upon the satisfactory solution of the approaches to the bridge and it was stated at the time that the Commission would expect to see plans for such approaches, as soon as they had been made. We were assured by the representatives of the District of Columbia Highway Department that this would be done.

Today we were shown by the National Capital Planning Commission plans for a complex of such approaches, which had been submitted to the Planning Commission in November 1958 and later approved as to function and location. We are informed that engineering studies are now being made by the Highway Department, based on these preliminary plans.

These plans, as viewed by the Commission of Fine Arts today for the first time, if carried into effect, would seriously interfere with the surroundings of the Lincoln Memorial and other buildings in the vicinity. They will also interfere with the setting of the National Cultural Center, as now proposed.

The Commission, as late as October 1, 1959, requested the Engineer Commissioner to submit plans for approaches to the bridge. This has not been done and the Commission of Fine Arts has no other recourse than to withdraw its approval of the design of the bridge until a satisfactory solution has been found and submitted to the Commission for the approaches to the bridge. The Commission of Fine Arts wishes to make clear that it has no responsibility for actions that have been without its knowledge.

COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
7000 Interior Department Building
Washington 25, D. C.

WASHINGTON: 14 October 1959 - Statement of David E. Timney,

Chairman, Commission of Fine Arts.

The Commission of Fine Arts today, by unanimous resolution,

withdrew the approval given in January 1959 of the design of the proposed Theodore Roosevelt Bridge at Constitution Avenue. Approval at that time was conditioned upon the satisfactory solution of the approaches to the bridge and it was stated at the time that the Commission would expect to see plans for such approaches, as soon as they had been made. We were assured by the representatives of the District of Columbia Highway Department that this would be done.

Today we were shown by the National Capital Planning Commission plans for a complex of such approaches, which had been submitted to the Planning Commission in November 1958 and later approved as to function and location. We are informed that engineering studies are now being made by the Highway Department, based on these preliminary plans.

These plans, as viewed by the Commission of Fine Arts today for the first time, if carried into effect, would seriously interfere with the surroundings of the Lincoln Memorial and other buildings in the vicinity. They will also interfere with the setting of the National Cultural Center, as now proposed.

The Commission, as late as October 1, 1959, requested the Engineer Commissioner to submit plans for approaches to the bridge. This has not been done and the Commission of Fine Arts has no other recourse than to withdraw its approval of the design of the bridge until a satisfactory solution has been found and submitted to the Commission for the approaches to the bridge. The Commission of Fine Arts wishes to make clear that it has no responsibility for actions that have been taken without its knowledge.

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

22 October 1959

Dear Mr. Thompson:

At a meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts on October 14, the members of the Commission considered the design which your office submitted showing the proposed treatment of the hedges and planting as a background for future monuments along the sides of the Avenue leading to Arlington National Cemetery. The members of the Commission agreed that the character of your drawing corresponded well with the plans that were made when the Avenue was first built and that the monuments located here in this manner will produce a dignified entrance to the cemetery. The scheme was approved as presented with the exception that members of the Commission believed that the recesses in the hedge should not be deeper than ten feet as compared with eighteen feet indicated on the drawing. We will be glad to work further with you in the development of this scheme in further detail and will have a meeting on November 18. If you have anything to present by that time we will make an opportunity for you to show it.

For the Commission of Fine Arts ;

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Mr. Harry T. Thompson
Superintendent, National Park Service
National Capital Parks
Department of the Interior
Washington 25, D. C.

cc-Honorable Fred A. Seaton
The Secretary of the Interior

EXHIBIT H

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

22 October 1959

Dear Colonel Sumner:

The Commission of Fine Arts at its meeting on October 14 considered the additional material which you submitted in connection with the design of the Domiciliary Building at the United States Soldiers Home. The original rendering for the part of this building to be considered was presented at the Commission meeting on August 19, at which time the Commission expressed interest in seeing what the appearance of the building would be when the future wings had been added. The members of the Commission still have some fears that the design will be lacking in scale and monotonous, but they decided that they would impose no objection to your proceeding with the erection of the proposed building.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Colonel George B. Sumner
District Engineer
Corps of Engineers, U. S. Army
First and Douglas Streets, NW
Washington 25, D. C.

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

1909-1910

Report of the Commission

The Commission of Fine Arts, created by the Act of March 3, 1907, has the honor to submit herewith its report for the first year of its existence. The Commission was organized on April 1, 1907, and has since that time been engaged in a study of the various questions connected with the improvement of the public buildings of the Government. It has held numerous public hearings, and has received many suggestions from architects, artists, and the general public. It has also conducted extensive research into the history and development of public architecture in the United States and abroad. The Commission believes that the results of its work will be of great value to the Government and to the public.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman

Very truly yours,
Secretary

Approved: [Signature]
[Name]
[Title]
[Address]